

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

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ABF-01 /027 W

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R 100827Z APR 78

FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE

TO USICA WASHDC

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 4421

AMEMBASSY GABORONE

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

UNCLAS MBABANE 1194

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJECT: NEW LOCATION FOR AMERICAN CULTURAL CENTER (ACC)

MBABANE

1. AMEMBASSY MBABANE HAS BEEN GIVEN APPROVAL IN PRINCIPLE TO MOVE TO NEW SITE. EMBASSY WILL OCCUPY 7TH AND 8TH FLOORS OF NEW MONETARY AUTHORITY OF SWAZILAND (MAS) BUILDING WHILE AID WILL OCCUPY 5TH AND 6TH FLOORS. FIRST THROUGH 4TH FLOORS WILL BE OCCUPIED BY MAS. BUILDING IS LOCATED JUST OFF MAIN STREET OF MBABANE AT OPPOSITE END OF TOWN (LESS THAN ONE-HALF MILE) FROM PRESENT CHANCERY LOCATION. MAS BUILDING ON THE MAIN ROAD LEADING TO TOWNSHIP AREA. IT IS EXPECTED TO BE READY FOR OCCUPANCY IN SPRING OF 1979.

2. AT PRESENT, GROUND FLOOR AREA IS AVAILABLE FOR LEASE. IT IS A RECTANGULAR AREA FACING THE STREET. DIMENSIONS ARE 14.5 METERS X 10.5 METERS (OR 1,636 SQUARE FEET). RENTAL COSTS ARE NOT SET AS YET. IT MAY BE EITHER 41 CENTS PER SQUARE FOOT (DOLS 670PER MONTH) OR 50 CENTS PER SQUARE FOOT (DOLS 818 PER MONTH).

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3. SEVERAL PROBLEMS DO EXIST, HOWEVER.

THERE FOUR CONCRETE PILLARS IN THE CENTER OF THE ROOM (APPROX. 10 FEET FROM EACH END AND 8 FEET FROM THE SIDES). THE SPACE AVAILABLE WOULD BE ADEQUATE FOR A READING ROOM, SMALL LIBRARIAN OFFICE, AND FILM STORAGE ROOM. THE

PAO OFFICE WOULD HAVE TO BE ON THE 7TH FLOOR.
THERE WOULD NOT BE ROOM FOR A MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM.

4. AS AN ALTERNATIVE, USICA COULD LEASE ONE OR TWO OF THE FLOORS PRESENTLY OCCUPIED BY THE CHANCERY FOR PAO/SECRETARIAL OFFICES, MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM, STORAGE ROOMS. (THE ACC IS LOCATED IN THE SAME BUILDING AS THE PRESENT CHANCERY ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE OF A SMALL EXTERIOR FOYER.) THE PRESENT EMBASSY/ACC LOCATION IS ON THE GROUND LEVEL (PLUS ONE ADDITIONAL STORY FOR CHANCERY) FACING THE MAIN STREET OF MBABANE.

5. THE PRESENT LOCATION HAS SEVERAL ADVANTAGES FOR SITE OF EXPANDED ACC; THERE ARE EXTENSIVE SECURITY RENOVATIONS ALREADY IN PLACE, THERE IS AN ALREADY EXTANT READING ROOM OPERATION, AND THERE IS ADEQUATE ROOM FOR EXPANSION. THE PRESENT CHANCERY AREA (TWO FLOORS) COULD EASILY ACCOMMODATE MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM, PAO-SECRETARIAL OFFICES, AND STORAGE AREA. THERE ARE TWO STREET-LEVEL ENTRANCES THAT COULD BE UTILIZED FOR ENTRY INTO MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM WITHOUT HAVING ANYONE ENTER SECURITY AREA UPSTAIRS. RENTAL OF THE ENTIRE CHANCERY (INCLUDING READING ROOM) IS DOLS 1,660 PER MONTH. READING ROOM BY ITSELF WOULD BE DOLS 290 PER MONTH.
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6. IN TERMS OF ATTRACTING OUR TARGET AUDIENCE TO AN ACC, NEITHER MOVING NOR STAYING AT PRESENT LOCATION WOULD CAUSE A SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN A TOWN AS SMALL AS MBABANE. THE MAS BUILDING IS A MORE ATTRACTIVELY DESIGNED BUILDING THAN OUR PRESENT LOCATION, AND THERE IS PROBABLY MORE FOOT TRAFFIC IN FRONT OF MAS BUILDING.

7. POST HAS BEEN MAKING THESE CONSIDERATIONS BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION THAT PAO WILL BE ASSIGNED TO MBABANE IN FY 78 OR FY 79. IN THAT CASE MORE OFFICE WOULD BE NEEDED AND A MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM WOULD BE AN INVALUABLE ASSET. POST RECOGNIZES THAT THERE ARE BOTH ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES IN KEEPING THE USICA OPERATION LOCATED CLOSE TO EMBASSY. MOVING TO NEW BUILDING WOULD PRECLUDE A MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM BEING BUILT NEAR THE READING ROOM, THE PAO WOULD BE SEVEN FLOORS UP; THERE WOULD BE NO ROOM FOR EXPANSION OF READING ROOM FACILITIES.

8. BY KEEPING USICA OPERATION IN PRESENT EMBASSY AREA,
THE READING ROOM WOULD BE ON OPPOSITE SIDE OF
EXTERIOR ENTRY FOYER IN THE SAME BUILDING FROM PAO
OFFICES AND MULTI-PURPOSE ROOM.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: POST WISHES TO INQUIRE IF
USICA OFFICER CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE SOONEST TO
ASSIST EMBASSY STAFF IN DECIDING ON WHICH FACILITY
IS BEST SUITED TO USICA GOALS FOR ITS AFRICAN
POSTS. WE MUST QUICKLY REQUEST CONTRACTOR AT
MONETARY AUTHORITY BUILDING TO RESERVE GROUND FLOOR
LOCATION FOR US OR SPACE WILL BE UNAVAILABLE.
ADVISE ASAP.
PERLOW
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